

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on January 15, 2003 has been reviewed and the comments of the Patent and Trademark Office have been considered. Prior to this paper, claims 24-27 were pending in the present application. By this paper, Applicants add claims 28-39. Support for these new claims can be found in the specification. Therefore, claims 24-39 are now pending in the present application.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance for the reasons that follow.

Power of Attorney

Applicants provide a copy of a signed Power of Attorney form attached in Appendix A to permit the law firm of Foley and Lardner to prosecute the present application. However, Applicants request that all future correspondence concerning this application be sent to:

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135A Malacca Street
10400 Penang, Malaysia

Interview of June 03, 2003

Examiner Tran is thanked for extending the courtesy of an interview to Applicants' representatives on June 03, 2003, where it was agreed that the outstanding non-final rejection would be withdrawn since the prior art of record fails to teach injection molding with ceramic powder.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

In the Office Action, claims 26 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As seen above, claims 26 and 27 have been amended, and Applicants respectfully request reconsideration.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 24-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Amaya (U.S. Patent No. 5,976,457). In response, Applicants respectfully submit that the above claims are allowable for the reasons that follow.

Applicants rely on MPEP § 2131, entitled “Anticipation – Application of 35 U.S.C. 102(a), (b), and (e),” which states that a “claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” It is respectfully submitted that Amaya does not describe each and every element of independent claim 24, from which all the other rejected claims depend.

Claim 24 contains the recitation of method elements that are not present in the art of record. For example, claim 24 recites ceramic injection molding a homogeneous dispersion of ceramic powder or powders to form a die block part. That is, according to the present invention, a ceramic mold is made through ceramic injection molding. In contrast, Amaya teaches the manufacture of molds with metal powders. Amaya is completely silent in regard to injection molding ceramic powder to make molds, teaching only the use of metal powder.

This deficiency is not an oversight by Amaya that is remedied by the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art without innovation. Amaya was aware of the use of ceramics, as he states that molds made according to his teachings from metal powder that can be used to make ceramic parts. In spite of this, he did not disclose, teach, or even suggest that an injection molding ceramic powder process could be used to make his molds. This is not surprising, as skill in ceramic injection molding is not intrinsically concomitant with skill in metal injection molding, the former requiring more specialized skills owing to the radically different properties, powder morphology and processibility of ceramic materials used in ceramic injection molding (a second reason why the use of ceramic injection molding is an inventive over the prior art).

In sum, because of the deficiencies of Amaya, claim 24 is allowable even before the above proffered amendments. Claims 25-27 are likewise allowable due to their dependency from claim 24.

New Claims

Applicants have added new claims 28-39. These claims are allowable for at least the reason that they depend from claim 24, an allowable claim. Support for these new claims can be found, among other locations, at paragraphs 0033 and 0034 of the published application. In regard to the shrinkage rate of 17% of claim 37, it is noted that this corresponds to the reverse of a scale-up factor of 1.2.

CONCLUSION

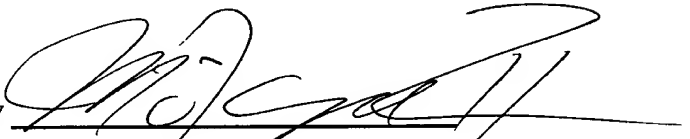
Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Examiner Tran is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date June 16, 2003

By 

FOLEY & LARDNER
Customer Number: 22428



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